



SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
1000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1000

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MEMORANDUM FOR CHIEF MANAGEMENT OFFICER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF
DEFENSE

SECRETARIES OF THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS
CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
UNDER SECRETARIES OF DEFENSE
CHIEF OF THE NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU
GENERAL COUNSEL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
DIRECTOR OF COST ASSESSMENT AND PROGRAM
EVALUATION
INSPECTOR GENERAL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONAL TEST AND EVALUATION
CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF
DEFENSE
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR LEGISLATIVE
AFFAIRS
ASSISTANT TO THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR PUBLIC
AFFAIRS
DIRECTOR OF NET ASSESSMENT
DIRECTORS OF DEFENSE AGENCIES
DIRECTORS OF DOD FIELD ACTIVITIES

SUBJECT: Political Activities of Service Members

All DoD personnel, Service members, and civilian employees alike, swear an oath to protect and defend the Constitution of the United States. Those of us privileged to serve our Nation, in and out of uniform, in the DoD must be the epitome of American values and ethics. Our mission and our ethos as military professionals are apolitical.

DoD has a long-standing policy of encouraging military personnel to carry out the obligations of citizenship, which includes permitting certain political activities. However, our policy and tradition also clearly limit active duty members from engaging in partisan political activities or actions that could appear to imply DoD sponsorship, approval, or endorsement of a political candidate, campaign, or cause. Political activity by members of the Armed Forces continues to be governed by DoD Directive 1344.10, which specifically lays out this policy.

I expect you to remind leaders at all levels in the Department to reinforce the apolitical nature of military service and professionalism, while ensuring all Service members remain free to exercise the responsibilities of citizenship as laws and regulations allow.

Patrick M. Shanahan
Acting